

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the above-identified application.

Claims 27-44 remain pending in this application, with Claims 27 and 37 being independent.

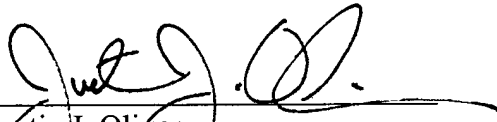
Claims 27-30, 32, 34-39, 41, 43 and 44 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese Application No. 10-244707 (Asami, et al.). Claims 31 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Asami, et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,408,493 (Aoki, et al.). Applicants traverse these rejections.

On December 4, 2002, Applicants filed a sworn translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 10-279352, which is one of the priority documents for the present application. That Japanese priority application was filed on the same day Asami, et al. published. In response to the filing of the sworn translation in 2002, the Examiner withdrew previously issued rejections which relied on Asami, et al. However, Asami, et al. is now being relied on again in the current Office Action.

Applicants' attorney discussed this matter with the Examiner in a recent telephone conference. During that telephone conference, the Examiner tentatively indicated that the outstanding rejection using Asami, et al. seemed improper in view of the sworn translation. In view of that discussion, and as suggested by the Examiner, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of both the outstanding rejection and the finality of the Office Action.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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